

8 strategies to motivate behavior change: social marketing the Brogan way.

Brogan & Partners has more than 30 years of experience marketing behavior change to audiences in Michigan and North Carolina. Behavior change marketing, also known as social marketing, is the term public health professionals use to refer to marketing that builds awareness about a social issue, like wear your seatbelt, don't smoke, get a mammogram and recycle.

But social marketing is more than just building awareness. It's about working to change people's behaviors or attitudes for the public good. It's about promoting a new behavior as more valuable than your target audiences' current behavior. And it's ultimately about empowering people to invest in making a lasting impact for society's greater good.

A lifetime of experience has led Brogan & Partners to establish strategies to improve the effectiveness of social marketing. This whitepaper explores eight strategies to sell behavior change.

1. Showing consequences of risky behavior.

Conventional wisdom says scare tactics don't work. But in our experience, showing consequences of risky behavior can be effective for kids and young adults if executed correctly. Social marketing campaigns that solely try to instill fear will not only fail to get their message across, but also drive its target audience away from making changes to their behaviors. That's because getting people to change their behaviors requires more than just a stark scare.

Scare tactics are most effective in the absence of exaggeration. Investigative specialist [Julia Corwin](#) writes, "If perceived as exaggerations, fear appeals can undermine the credibility of the campaign, making the problem behavior even more resistant to change." When showing consequences of risky behavior, it's important to keep the facts straight. Don't stretch the truth; be realistic. In doing so, you'll be able to connect to your audience and be a trusted source, even if you're tapping into their fear emotion.

In addition, [research](#) shows scare tactics are especially effective for one-time behaviors (screenings, abstinence, vaccines). That's exactly what we did when the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services asked us to create a campaign for abstinence. We put together the spot "[I Wish I Waited](#)," to show teenagers the consequences they could potentially face if they chose to have sex.



Abstinence TV: I Wish I Waited

2. Showing consequences of risky behaviors on others.

Perhaps your target audience already knows the personal effects of their risky behavior. They've been told multiple times by countless ads, warning labels, and family members and friends. But maybe knowing the consequences and its effect on themselves isn't enough to make them want to change their behavior. Maybe their mantra falls somewhere along the lines of, "It's my life. I'll live with the consequences."

But what if their behavior affected someone else's life? What if their loved ones had to live with the consequences? Deflecting the consequences of an individual's behavior onto someone else is an effective way to motivate behavior change. It forces them to take a step back and see the negative impact that their risky behavior has on their loved ones. Focusing the attention on others forces individuals to reevaluate their behavior and seek a new alternative for the sake of those around them.

See how we motivated behavior change by creating TV spots that show how smoking and gambling can affect loved ones.



Quitline TV: "It's Like They're Smoking"



Gamble Responsibly TV: "The Confession"

3. Using celebrities.

Occasionally a celebrity can offer the breakthrough voice for a campaign. In fact, a [study](#) found that signing a big-name endorser increases a company's sales by \$10 million annually. But celebrity endorsement is more than just selecting someone with fame to fuel your message. You can add all the glitz and glimmer you want and still end up with an ineffective campaign. To reap the benefits of celebrity endorsement, it's important to understand your target audience and which celebrity will resonate with them the most.

It's especially vital to choose a celebrity who genuinely cares or is associated with the cause or message of the campaign. While they may be an actor or actress for a living, the last thing you want them to be doing is acting like they care about a cause. Being a celebrity alone does not make a spokesperson credible. According to the [Source Credibility Model](#), the "effectiveness of a message depends on the perceived trustworthiness and credibility of the celebrity endorser." So the next time you consider using a celebrity endorser for your social campaign, choose someone who genuinely believes in the message themselves. Their ability to translate the message in a believable manner can influence your audience to change their behaviors or take action.

Brogan & Partners used creative that featured actress Meryl Streep and created a campaign that featured Michigan State University's basketball coach, Tom Izzo to encourage viewers to take better care of their health.



Colorectal Cancer TV: Meryl Streep
"Control" Screen for Life



H1N1 Awareness: "Flu Fight" Coach Tom Izzo

4. Empowering people to take personal responsibility.

Sometimes, the most motivating messages take the form of a challenge. But let's face it. A lot of social marketing campaigns challenge people by telling them what NOT to do – don't smoke, don't drink, don't litter, etc. But instead of always telling people what they shouldn't do, it can create an even more powerful message by telling your target audience what they can do: **take responsibility**. Plus, [research](#) shows that people are more likely to respond to positive-framing messages, especially when it comes to health-related topics.

This is an effective strategy because instead of focusing on the problem, it provides a clear solution and challenges people to take action. It's also essential to note that social marketing campaigns that challenge people to take responsibility by committing to one simple change (lose 10 percent of your body weight) is more successful than those that overwhelm their audience with multiple solutions (exercise more, eat healthier). This empowers your audience to be more confident about changing their behavior. It gives them the ability and motivation to tackle the first step they need to take to disassociate from the negative behaviors. If you're creating a social marketing campaign that involves health-related topics, consider this approach. Emphasizing the solution and empowering individuals to take responsibility for themselves may be angle you need to make a lasting difference.

For example, instead of telling Michiganders what they needed to stop doing, we told them to take responsibility for themselves by [taking a pledge](#) to lose 10 percent of their body weight. We empowered them with extra support so they would have the tools they need to make a positive change. This included a starter kit with tips, coupons and free gifts, a dedicated Facebook page, and educational text messages and emails.



MI Healthier TOMORROW

See how losing 10% can change your future.




Learn More
Take the Pledge
Get Started
Share



Join the Movement

Losing just 10% of your body weight decreases your risk of chronic conditions, like diabetes, heart disease, cancer and stroke. Make today the day you put yourself and your future first, for once. Take the pledge to lose 10%, get support and get moving. You can change your future, one good decision at a time.



MDCH
Rick Snyder, Governor
James K. Hoveman, Director



MI Healthier TOMORROW

Today is the day I choose a healthier future.

23290

NUMBER OF PLEDGES

Pledge to lose 10% and we'll mail you the free MI Healthier Tomorrow starter kit.

First Name*

Last Name*

Email*

Address

City State

Zip Mobile Phone

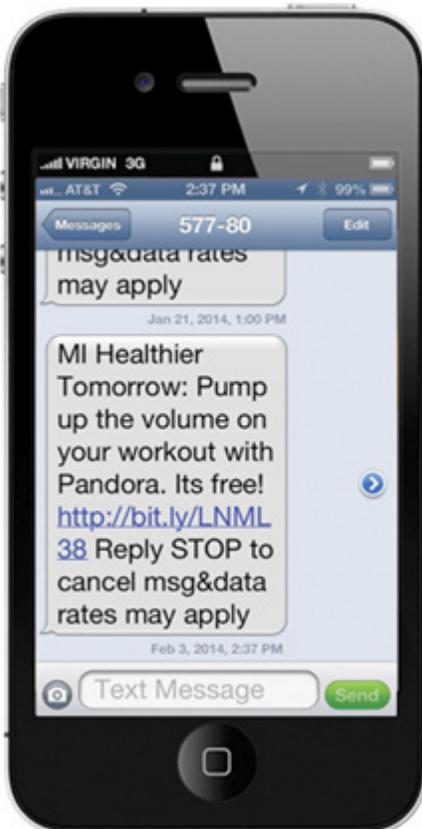
How did you find out about MI Healthier Tomorrow?

Sign up to receive free healthy tips and savings twice a month. Choose email updates, mobile text updates, or both:

Email Mobile

* These fields are mandatory. (0/250/250)

SUBMIT





MI Healthier Tomorrow
March 6



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if you packed
a healthy lunch today.



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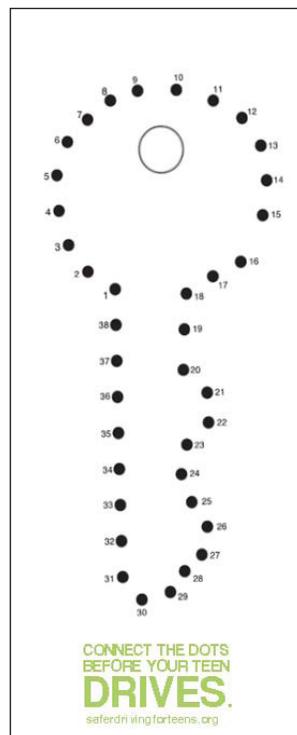
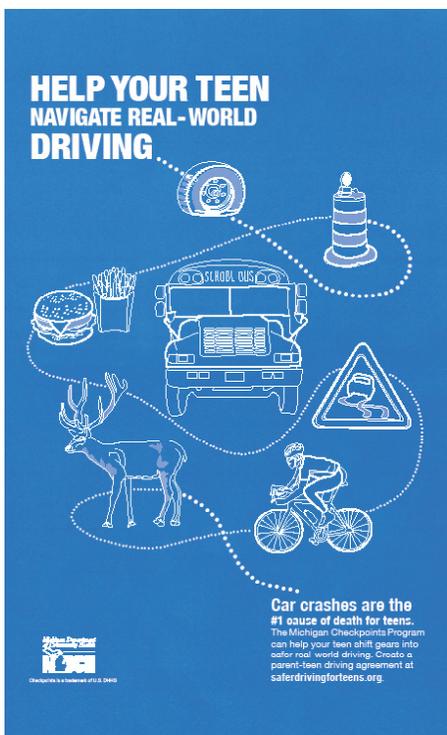
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5. Appealing to an intervener to affect the situation.

In a social marketing campaign, it's your goal to motivate a specific target audience to change their behaviors. But that doesn't necessarily mean that's who you'll be always speaking to. It's common for social marketing campaigns to speak directly to their target audience. But it's not always the most effective way to go, especially when it comes to topics like healthcare and safety, which is why you need to appeal to an intervener.

So who is an effective intervener to appeal to? Women. **That's because women make or influence 85 percent of all purchasing decisions and 80 percent of the healthcare decisions for their families.** That means you can motivate behavior change by getting the attention of the individual with the most influence, which are women in most cases.

How do you get teens to become safer drivers? Appeal to their parents. Brogan & Partners did just that with this Parent-Teen Driving Agreement campaign. We encouraged parents to adopt a step-by-step process and set limits to driving in order to help their teens gradually get better.



6. Casting kids to get more attention.

If there's one strategy that never fails to get people's attention (and keep it), it's including kids in your social marketing campaigns. Why? Because casting children has proven to deliver marketing messages that break through. They're funny. They're relatable. And most importantly, they create an emotional connection that can really motivate behavior change.

Children have the ability to tug on the heart strings of everyone, from parents and grandparents who have children and grandchildren of their own, to teenagers and young adults who were kids themselves not too long ago. When a child delivers a campaign message, it does more than assure your audience will hear the message. There's power in the emotional connection that is made when they look at the campaign and immediately think about the child in their life or the inner-child that still resonates within.

For example, casting a child can add stickiness to your social marketing message by juxtaposing kids in adult situations or maximizing the funny factor, creating an emotional connection that will really compel people to change their behaviors for good.

The National Center for Education Statistics found that U.S. students' basic mathematical and science skills fell below the international average for 21 countries. So the National Education Defense Project partnered with Brogan & Partners to offer hope to this issue by creating this charming TV commercial, featuring young children interviewing for a job and bragging about their qualifications (which were more adorable than they were impressive).



STEM TV: Interview

7. Using guerilla marketing tactics.

People are exposed to anywhere from **250 to 3,000 ads or more per day**. That means your social marketing campaign is competing against all those ads to get attention. It's easy to feel like your message will be buried underneath all the rest. But it doesn't have to be. With a little creativity, you can find nontraditional ways to serve your campaign on a platter right to your target audience—literally.

From urinal mats to restroom mirror clings to sidewalk chalk campaigns and environmental takeovers, your social marketing campaign can be presented in a variety of different ways. So you're not confined to delivering your message via a flyer, radio or TV commercial or banner ad. **Creative Guerilla Marketing** defines guerilla marketing as “unconventional marketing tactics that yield maximum results.” It's thinking outside of the box to get people's attention. And more importantly, it's making your message memorable to anyone who comes across it. In order to motivate behavior change, a message has to resonate. Using guerilla marketing tactics for your social marketing campaign will do just that.

Brogan & Partners was assigned the task to market free HIV treatment resources to individuals with HIV. To accomplish this, we used in-venue guerilla marketing at gay bars. So from the bar coasters and napkins to urinal mats and mirror clings,



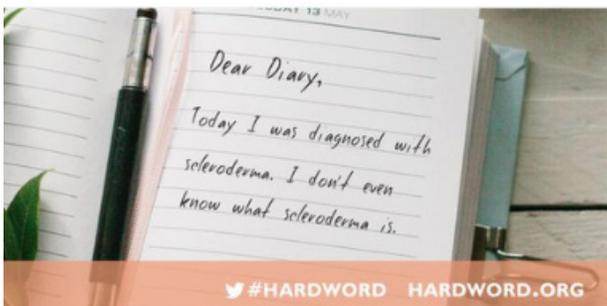


8. Engaging them in the conversation.

92 percent of marketers say social media has generated exposure for their business. It's no different when it comes to increasing awareness for your social marketing campaign. Social media has become the go-to for increasing awareness and engagement, especially when it comes to positive behavior adoption. So if you want to get your message out, this real-time platform is the perfect way to start a conversation and invite others to join.

One of the key benefits of social media is that it allows users to engage with the message in different ways. Unlike traditional forms of social marketing that just deliver a message, social media allows people to immediately engage with the message and others in their online social community. It provides a community of support for people who need the extra push to overcome the, "I'm alone in this fight" attitude. Additionally, social media is a great medium that allows marketers to follow up with their audience. People can do more than just listen to a message; they can share a post, comment on a status, retweet a tweet or all of the above. In doing so, what was once a one-on-one engagement between your social marketing campaign and an individual has the potential to reach thousands, via your audiences' social networks.

Scleroderma, an autoimmune disease that has no known cause or cure, affects the lives of 300,000 individuals in the U.S. today. But millions of people still know nothing about it. So Brogan & Partners took to Facebook and Twitter to increase awareness and spread the word about the disease.



#HARDWORD HARDWORD.ORG



Scleroderma Fndtn
@scleroderma

Follow

When you or your loved one was diagnosed with #scleroderma, did you know what the disease was? #hardword

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Scleroderma Rsrch Fdn
@srfcure

Follow

Because #scleroderma is so rare, it can take years before a patient is diagnosed with the disease. #HardWord

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Social marketing is all about making a lasting impact. And when it's done right, it can change behaviors, families, communities and societies for the better. These eight strategies have been our social marketing principals for more than 30 years, and they continue to work for us today.

If you need a proven team to make your social marketing successful, talk to us. Just contact our managing partner, Ellyn Davidson, at EDavidson@brogan.com.